

Malayan Aviation in the Making

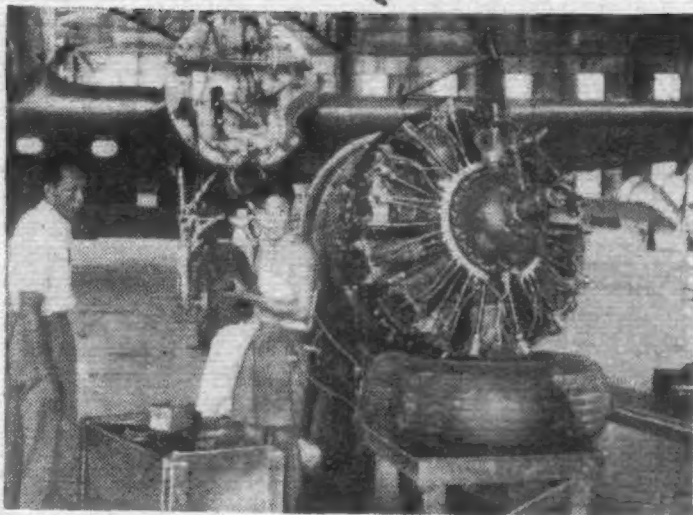
in the proposed system were ready for operation with skeleton control and with the essential radio aids. Malayan Airways were ready to start with one Airspeed Consul.

Runways at Kallang have since been repaired and extended, one hangar has been completely restored and others are under repair, while local residents have been recruited and trained as Control officers. Every airport in the system has air-to-ground and point-to-point radio and also meteorological forecasting. Within Malaya the company now operates 19 flights a week from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, seven to Ipoh and Penang, two weekly to Kuantan and Kota Bharu on the East coast, and twice a week to Penang and Kota Bharu. In the international field the company operates from Singapore twice a week to Batavia, a distance of 500 miles; to Bangkok, 800 miles; and once weekly to Saigon, Palembang and Medan.

Throughout Malaya air transport is now regarded as a normal method of conveyance for the moderately wealthy traveller. Fares are about 25 per cent above those for first-class railway journeys, but trains are slow, hot and dirty, and the £ to fare from Singapore to Penang, a distance of 360 miles, is considered reasonable. Kallang airport, which has modern passenger handling buildings, customs facilities, a restaurant and bar, is situated between the two main residential districts of Singapore and is nearer to both than the railway station. The tickets issued by Malayan Airways are small and only a few entries are required for a booking which, incidentally, is frequently made immediately before departure. Passenger lists, manifests and loadsheets also are more simple than the voluminous documents common elsewhere.

Training Local Labour

Ground aids and their maintenance are the responsibility of the Civil Aviation and Telecommunications department of the government, and with the exception of the headquarters staff at Singapore the operators are normally recruited from local residents. For nine months after the war Quantas Empire Airways lent engineers to Malayan Airways, but with the help of B.O.A.C., who have since acquired a minority interest in the company, sufficient engineers have now been recruited. Stewardesses on the scheduled services are Malayan, but practically all other aircrew and licensed engineers are European; local-born radio officers are however under training, and an extensive apprenticeship scheme has also been started to train local boys as licensed ground engineers. Captain R. P. Mollard, who was line manager at Durban, is at the head of the technical organization. Flying is undoubtedly becoming a habit in Malaya, and membership of the flying clubs is high in spite of the post-war flying cost of £2 an hour. Mr. David Fiennes, an official of Malayan Airways from whom comes this news, is of the opinion that although the future will depend upon many factors both



Local labour has been recruited for Malayan Airways, and there are sufficient engineers to maintain the company's own aircraft and those of other operators and local flying clubs.

economic and political, with peace in South-East Asia and reasonable prosperity, Singapore will become as great a centre of air transport and air commerce as it is for shipping.

In order to cover the East Indian Archipelago and its many islands with a network of air routes with Singapore at the centre, Mr. Fiennes believes that special attention must be paid to two factors: The first concerns Malaya only, and requires that if aviation is to pay, without unreasonable fares being charged, it must be based on local skill and talent. Government help would be required to provide technical education and to sponsor scholarships for training in England. The second factor concerns the English manufacturers. At five-yearly intervals economic aircraft of the right size and with all the "bugs" taken out must be provided. They must also be complete with spares schedules and an assured spares supply over several years. Special attention must be given to such tropical problems as air-conditioning, particularly whilst aircraft are on the ground. In his opinion there has been too much emphasis in England upon small feeder-line aircraft seating six to twelve passengers. The operator in Malaya is faced with the problem of providing travel facilities for large commercial communities over considerable distances of sea and jungle, and a still air range of not less than 1,200 miles is required; and a cruising speed of 200 m.p.h. would allow comfortable schedules to be arranged. Aircraft to carry twenty to thirty passengers are needed, with facilities for rapid handling of baggage and mail at destinations en route. The airfield

programme is still undecided, but if airfields are not be extended the take-off distance at the all-up weight should not exceed 1,200 yards in tropical conditions.

Tarmac and airport buildings at Kallang Airport. Overseas passengers normally report 30 minutes and those for internal services 15 minutes before departure time. Seventy-five per cent of the travellers in Malaya are not European.



The internal air routes of the Malayan Peninsula.

